

To: House and Senate Local Government Members

From: Rick Gustine, Chair, Legislation Comm.  
MT Assoc. of Registered Land Surveyors (MARLS)

MARLS is the professional association representing the surveyors of Montana and is currently comprised of 314 Professional Land Surveyors and an additional 240 members who are working toward registration as a Professional Land Surveyor or are otherwise working in the land surveying profession. The majority of MARLS membership is in private practice, but there are many who work for the federal, state or local government.

One of the objectives as stated in MARLS Mission Statement is "To foster and support legislation generally beneficial to the profession and to the citizens of the state of Montana". We will be following any proposed legislation which might directly effect the land surveying profession including licensing and registration, the Montana Subdivision and Platting Act, to some extent land use planning and zoning laws, and in general any legislation adversely effecting private property rights in Montana.

While we do work with/ for the land development community who concentrate on large scale subdivision development projects a big portion of our workload is working on small surveying projects for the non-developer land owners in Montana. The big time developers are aware of the labyrinth of laws, regulations, costs and time frames involved in land development, the Mom and Pop Montanan who come to us because they want to sell off a piece or two of their property don't have a clue about the process for the most part and it's those clients we try to watch out for. They don't understand design standards, road standards, fire protection standards, water and sewage requirements, impact fees and everything else involved which makes it increasingly more cost prohibitive for them to split off a piece of land to supplement their income.

Unfortunately there is no 'Montana Assoc. of Private Property Owners to represent and protect their interest, so historically our Association along with to some extent the realtors, home builders, etc. have stood up for their private property rights. There are those who will come before you this session trying to add even more prohibitions and restrictions to the subdivision process, please keep in mind that the more restrictive the process becomes the more costs go up and it is already to the point where more and more Montanans cannot afford to buy property or a home in Montana.

Thank you for your time and we look forward to working with you this session.